

SITUATION REPORT NO. 26
INCIDENT NO. 99-009
DATE: July 16, 1999 TIME: 3:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Storms and flooding – Above normal soil moisture content throughout North Dakota, compounded by seven years of flooding and additional precipitation, has resulted in overland, river and flash flooding and ground movement (landslides and mudslides). Excessive high winds associated with storm and tornado activity have contributed to ongoing problems faced by North Dakotans.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: Severe summer weather impacted the state this week as tornadoes, hail and high winds damaged crops, buildings, homes, vehicles, trees and power lines, and heavy rain caused flash flooding. These weather conditions continued to add to the magnitude of this disaster event.

A July 12 storm in Cavalier County caused a 50 percent loss of yield when hail damaged 37,000 acres of wheat, canola, barley and sunflower. Minor damage occurred to windows and shingles, the county U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) emergency board reported.

Two storms impacted Walsh County, the first occurring on July 12 when storms affected a six-mile long area near the Walsh County/Cavalier County line and the city of Fairdale. Hail damaged up to 40 quarters of cropland. The Fairdale area received 1.5 inches of rain. Elsewhere in the county, rainfall amounts ranged from one-quarter to one-half of an inch. During the July 13-14 storm, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued three separate tornado warnings for the western and southern portions of the county and the Minto-Ardoch area. A possible tornado and high winds damaged two barns and knocked down an estimated 500 trees in the southwest corner of Walshville Township. Hail destroyed crops, damaged homes and broke windows.

In Ward County, tornadic activity on Tuesday, July 13, caused significant damage to rural areas south and southeast of Minot. Telephone and power lines were knocked down in Burlington. Windows, shingles and siding were damaged on homes in an area from Carpio southeast through Foxholm, Burlington, Minot, Logan and Sawyer. High winds destroyed three buildings located approximately three miles south of Minot. Flash flooding occurred in the city of Minot, causing severe storm drain overload. Flood waters washed over a 150-foot stretch of U.S. Highway 52, one-quarter mile west of Foxholm.

On July 13, hail, high winds and a possible tornado in Burke County left a 35-mile-long path of destruction, the county USDA emergency board has reported. The width of the damaged area measured from one to seven miles wide. Agricultural officials placed the percent of yield loss for 100,000 acres of wheat, barley, canola, lentils and peas at 15 to 100 percent. Approximately \$20,000 in damage occurred to farmsteads and service buildings.

The Pierce County USDA Board reported that a July 13 storm with excessive rain, high wind and hail damaged cropland in the southern portion of the county. Damage occurred in seven townships. A total of 26,700 acres were affected and included wheat, sunflower, canola, barley and flax. Percent of yield losses ranged from 50 to 100 percent.

Hail that fell during a July 13-14 storm in Wells County damaged 48,100 acres of cropland. Percent of yield losses ranged from 20 to 50 percent for wheat, barley, canola, bean and sunflower crops.

Heavy rainfall on July 15 aggravated existing flood-related problems throughout Pembina County. By 9 a.m., the county had received 1.32 inches of rain. Power outages occurred in the cities of Hamilton, Neche and Pembina, posing a public safety risk because the weather siren in Pembina will not activate without electrical power. In Cavalier, sewer drains in the streets were not able to keep up. Water as deep as one foot was flowing over the Cavalier Airport road. Four hours after the storm, water remained in deep holes in the road. Pembina County dispatchers notified the National Weather Service (NWS) that winds gusts of up to 55 miles per hour (mph) were reported in the Cavalier area. Significant impact to agricultural crops has occurred because of extremely wet conditions. A weather spotter reported that during June, an area seven miles northwest of Cavalier received 3.53 inches compared to 1.66 inches last year and a normal of 3.07 inches. To date in July, that area has received 4.19 inches compared to 1.58 inches last year and a normal of 3.25 inches. Since the beginning of the year, that area has received 14.28 inches. Ground water tables are extremely high, and both the Red and the Pembina Rivers are higher than normal.

In McKenzie County, a thunderstorm hit the city of Watford City on July 15. Winds were recorded in excess of 100 mph and more than one-half inch of rain, accompanied by pea-sized hail, fell in a 10-minute period. A roof that was blown off a fertilizer warehouse smashed into a convenience store's gas pumps, rendering them inoperable. Numerous trees were uprooted, and several streets were blocked with debris. Homes received light to moderate damages.

Devils Lake at Creel Bay measured 1,447.18 feet on July 16. As reported previously, the lake is expected to crest from 1,447.5 to 1,448 feet by August.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Voluntary Agency coordinators for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) participated in a Minot recovery team meeting on July 15. Participants included The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Community Action Agency, the Mental Health Association in North Dakota, Lutheran Rural Response and United Church of Christ.

Local weather spotters were activated in several areas of the state this week to help track storms.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: On July 8, Governor Schafer requested that the State USDA Emergency Board compile damage assessment reports from each county to determine agricultural production and economic losses resulting from the disaster.

The N.D. Department of Human Services has established a food stamp field office at the Bottineau County Courthouse in Bottineau to assist disaster victims. The agency's Crisis Counseling Program staff recently signed a contract with the Mental Health Association in North Dakota to provide peer counseling service in the Minot area.

By July 14, North Dakota Job Service had received 1,770 claims for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. To date, \$441,569 in benefits has been paid to farmers, ranchers, farm workers, migrant workers and other self-employed individuals who lost income because of the disaster. The filing period ends July 21.

As of July 14, the state-federal Public Assistance Program had received a total of 263 applications. Applicants include: 38 counties; 120 cities; 13 electrical cooperatives; 24 school districts; 10 park districts; 23 water resource boards; four Indian reservations; seven state agencies; and 24 others, including private non-profit organizations providing essential governmental services.

Approximately 5,000 North Dakotans have applied for Disaster Housing Assistance. To date, FEMA has paid \$3.8 million in benefits under the Disaster Housing Program.

The Individual and Family Grant Program, administered by North Dakota Emergency Management, has received 2,438 applications to date. Approximately \$148,000 in benefits has been approved. The average grant amounts to \$870.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has sent 4,213 applications to disaster victims and has administered \$1,147,300 in loans as of July 14.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: Assistance has been provided, as reported.

8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: FEMA, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Red Cross, consulting engineers and members of the N.D. Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
9. OTHER: The next Devils Lake State Flood Coordination Center meeting has been scheduled for 1:30 p.m., July 22, at the Ramsey County Courthouse basement meeting room.

Situation Reports published by the N.D. Division of Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet Home page. The address is:
<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director